

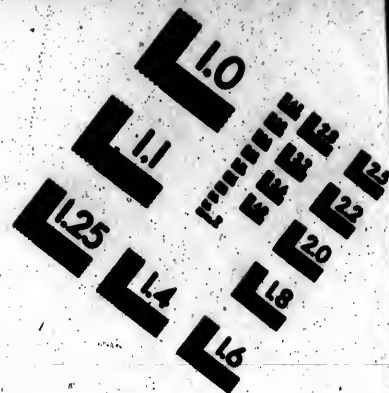


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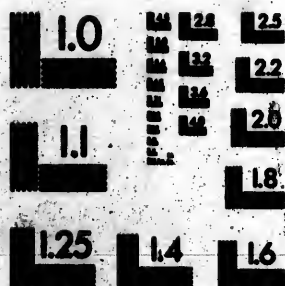
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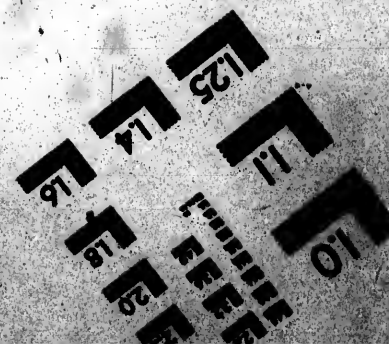


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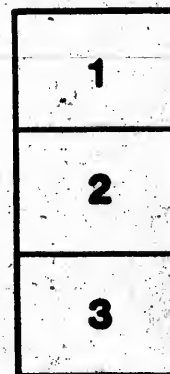
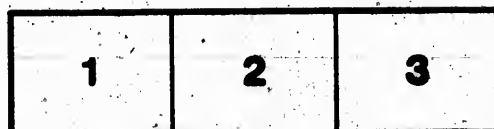
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FOUNDATION COVENANT

OF THE

Northern Congregational Church,

TORONTO;

AND

DECLARATION

OF

FAITH AND ORDER

OF THE

Congregational Churches of Great Britain.

FORMED 1867.

TORONTO:

COFF, CLARK & Co., PRINTERS, 67 & 69 COLBORNE STREET.

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N O R T H E R N
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
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FOUNDATION COVENANT

We, whose names are hereunto appended, holding generally the truths set forth in the subjoined declaration of faith and order of the Congregational Churches of England and Wales, do solemnly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, enter into covenant one with another as members of the same church, designing that all our acts, being done in His name, shall be for the Divine Glory.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—

1. We solemnly engage before God, and pledge ourselves to one another, in reliance upon the Spirit of all grace, to continue in that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in which we now stand, and daily to maintain habits of watchfulness, prayer, and reading the Divine Word.

2. Firmly believing that the increase to the word comes of God alone, we will ever look up to Him for His blessing on the preaching of the Gospel, and the religious teaching of the young amongst us.

And believing that for these things God will be enquired of by His people, we engage to continue instant in prayer, both in private and in the Church, that such a blessing may be given.

3. Believing that it is the will of Christ our Head, that the members of His body should join together for mutual comfort and edification, we now solemnly engage one with another as follows:—

- (1). We will, God helping, love one another, with a pure heart, fervently.
- (2). We will care for each other's welfare, and guard each other's good name.
- (3.) We will sympathise with one another, both in sorrow and in joy.
- (4). We will help one another in all ways in which help may be needed, and specially will care for the sick, the aged, the widow, the orphan, and the poor amongst us.
- (5). We will endeavour heartily to work for God in the Church, according to the ability with which He has blessed us, and in the sphere where we can be of most service.

(6).

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(6). We will contribute of our substance, as the Lord gives us ability, for the maintenance of the Ministry amongst us, for the instruction of the young, and for the relief of the sick and poor; and this will we do cheerfully, according to the will of God.

(7). We will hold up the hands of our Pastor by a diligent attendance on the services of God's house, and on the other meetings of the Church; by constant prayer for his success; by such manifestations of sympathy and affection, as we may have opportunity of showing from time to time; avoiding a censorious spirit, taking heed to what we hear, and esteeming him very highly in love for his work's sake.

(8). We will do what in us lies to promote the peace and purity of the Church.

(9). Those of us who have entered on the Family relation, will honor the Lord therein; we will train up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, commanding them and our household after us, inculcating the truth, bringing them to the Church, and setting before them the pattern of a Christian life.

(10). Finally, we will, God helping us, cultivate loving affection toward all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and especially toward the churches of the same faith and

order in the land, being ready to co-operate with them for the extension of the Kingdom of God. We will care for the city in which our lot is cast, and endeavour to reclaim the wicked, and comfort the poor, the sick, the prisoner, and the outcast therein. And we will, as much as in us lies, labour and pray for the conversion of the heathen of this and other lands, ceaselessly praying — "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."



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DECLARATION

OF

FAITH AND ORDER

OF THE

Congregational Churches of Great Britain.

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Declaration.

The CONGREGATIONAL Churches in England and Wales, frequently called INDEPENDENT, hold the following Doctrines, as of Divine authority, and as the foundation of Christian faith and practice.

They are also formed and governed according to the principles hereinafter stated.

PRELIMINARY NOTES.

1. It is not designed, in the following summary, to do more than to state the leading doctrines of faith and order maintained by Congregational Churches in general.

2. It is not proposed to offer any *proofs, reasons, or arguments*, in support of the doctrines herein stated, but simply to *declare* what the denomination believes to be taught by the pen of inspiration.

3. It is not intended to present a *scholastic* or *critical* confession of faith, but merely such a statement as any intelligent member of the body might offer, as containing its leading principles.

4. It is not intended that the following statement should be put forth with any Authority, or as a standard to which assent should be required.

5. Disallowing the utility of Creeds and Articles of religion as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies, as a term of communion, Congregationalists are yet willing to declare, for general information, what is commonly believed among them; reserving to every one the most perfect liberty of conscience.

6. Upon some minor points of doctrine and practice, they, differing among themselves, allow to each other the right to form an unbiassed judgment of the word of God.

7. They wish it to be observed, that, notwithstanding their jealousy of subscription to Creeds and Articles, and their disapproval of the imposition of any human standard, whether of faith or discipline, they are far more agreed in their doctrines and practices, than any church which enjoins subscription, and enforces a human standard of orthodoxy; and they believe that there is no minister and no church among them, that would deny the substance of any one of the following doctrines of religion, though each might prefer to state his sentiments in his own way.

PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

I. The Scriptures of the Old Testament, as received by the Jews, and the books of the New Testament, as received by the Primitive Christians from the Evange-

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lists and Apostles, Congregational Churches believe to be divinely inspired, and of supreme authority. These writings, in the languages in which they were originally composed, are to be consulted, by the aids of sound criticism, as a final appeal in all controversies; but the common version they consider to be adequate to the ordinary purposes of Christian instruction and edification.

II. They believe in one God, essentially wise, holy, just, and good; eternal, infinite, and immutable, in all natural and moral perfections; the Creator, Supporter, and Governor of all beings, and of all things.

III. They believe that God is revealed in the Scriptures, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that to each are attributed the same Divine properties and perfections. The doctrine of the Divine existence, as above stated, they cordially believe, without attempting fully to explain.

IV. They believe that man was created after the Divine image, sinless, and in his kind perfect.

V. They believe that the first man disobeyed the Divine command, fell from his state of innocence and purity, and involved all his posterity in the consequences of that fall.

VI. They believe that therefore all mankind are born in sin, and that a fatal inclination to moral evil, utterly incurable by human means, is inherent in every descendant of Adam.

VII. They believe that God having, before the foundation of the world, designed to redeem fallen man,

made disclosures of his mercy, which were the grounds of faith and hope from the earliest ages.

VIII. They believe that God revealed more fully to Abraham the covenant of his grace; and, having promised that from his descendants should arise the Deliverer and Redeemer of mankind, set that patriarch and his posterity apart, as a race specially favoured and separated to his service; a peculiar church, formed and carefully preserved, under the Divine sanction and government, until the birth of the promised Messiah.

IX. They believe that, in the fulness of the time, the Son of God was manifested in the flesh, being born of the Virgin Mary, but conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit; and that our Lord Jesus Christ was both the Son of man, and the Son of God;—partaking fully and truly of human nature, though without sin,—equal with the Father, and “the express image of his person.”

X. They believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, revealed, either personally in his own ministry, or by the Holy Spirit in the ministry of his apostles, the whole mind of God, for our salvation; and that by his obedience to the Divine law while he lived, and by his sufferings unto death, he meritoriously “obtained eternal redemption for us;” having thereby vindicated and illustrated Divine justice, “magnified the law,” and “brought in everlasting righteousness.”

XI. They believe that, after his death and resurrection, he ascended up into heaven, where, as the Mediator, he “ever liveth” to rule over all, and to

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"make intercession for them that come unto God by him."

XII. They believe that the Holy Spirit is given in consequence of Christ's mediation, to quicken and renew the hearts of men; and that his influence is indispensably necessary to bring a sinner to true repentance, to produce saving faith, to regenerate the heart, and to perfect our sanctification.

XIII. They believe that we are justified through faith in Christ, as "the Lord our righteousness;" and not "by the works of the Law."

XIV. They believe that all who will be saved were the objects of God's eternal and electing love, and were given by an act of Divine sovereignty to the Son of God; which in no way interferes with the system of means, nor with the grounds of human responsibility; being wholly unrevealed as to its objects, and not a rule of human duty.

XV. They believe that the Scriptures teach the final perseverance of all true believers to a state of eternal blessedness, which they are appointed to obtain through constant faith in Christ, and uniform obedience to his commands.

XVI. They believe that a holy life will be the necessary effect of a true faith, and that good works are the certain fruits of a vital union to Christ.

XVII. They believe that the sanctification of true Christians, or their growth in the graces of the Spirit, and in meetness for heaven, is gradually carried on through the whole period during which it pleases God

to continue them in the present life; and that, at death, their souls, perfectly freed from all remains of evil, are immediately received into the presence of Christ.

XVIII. They believe in the perpetual obligation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: the former to be administered to all converts to Christianity and their children, by the application of water to the subject, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and the latter to be celebrated by Christian churches as a token of faith in the Saviour, and of brotherly love.

XIX. They believe that Christ will finally come to judge the whole human race, according to their works; that the bodies of the dead will be raised again; and that as the Supreme Judge, he will divide the righteous from the wicked, will receive the righteous into "life everlasting," but send away the wicked into "everlasting punishment."

XX. They believe that Jesus Christ directed his followers to live together in Christian fellowship, and to maintain the communion of saints; and that, for this purpose, they are jointly to observe all Divine ordinances, and maintain that church order and discipline, which is either expressly enjoined by inspired institution, or sanctioned by the undoubted example of the apostles and of apostolic churches.

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PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH ORDER AND DISCIPLINE.

I. The Congregational Churches hold it to be the will of Christ that true believers should voluntarily assemble together to observe religious ordinances, to promote mutual edification and holiness, to perpetuate and propagate the gospel in the world, and to advance the glory and worship of God, through Jesus Christ; and that each society of believers, having these objects in view in its formation, is properly a Christian Church.

II. They believe that the New Testament contains, either in the form of express statute, or in the example and practice of apostles and apostolic churches, all the articles of faith necessary to be believed, and all the principles of order and discipline requisite for constituting and governing Christian societies; and that human traditions, fathers, and councils, canons and creeds, possess no authority over the faith and practice of Christians.

III. They acknowledge Christ as the only Head of the Church, and the officers of each church under him, as ordained to administer his laws impartially to all; and their only appeal, in all questions touching their religious faith and practice, is to the Sacred Scriptures.

IV. They believe that the New Testament authorizes every Christian church to elect its own officers, to manage all its own affairs, and to stand independent of, and irresponsible to, all authority, saving that only of the Supreme and Divine Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. They believe that the only officers placed by the apostles over individual churches, are the bishops or pastors, and the deacons; the number of these being dependent upon the numbers of the church; and that to these, as the officers of the church, is committed respectively the administration of its spiritual and temporal concerns—subject however, to the approbation of the church.

VI. They believe that no persons should be received as members of Christian churches, but such as make a credible profession of Christianity, are living according to its precepts, and attest a willingness to be subject to its discipline; and that none should be excluded from the fellowship of the church, but such as deny the faith of Christ, violate his laws, or refuse to submit themselves to the discipline which the word of God enforces.

VII. The power of admission into any Christian church, and rejection from it, they believe to be vested in the church itself, and to be exercised only through the medium of its own officers.

VIII. They believe that Christian churches should statedly meet for the celebration of public worship, for the observance of the Lord's Supper, and for the sanctification of the first day of the week.

IX. They believe that the power of a Christian church is purely spiritual, and should in no way be corrupted by union with temporal or civil power.

X. They believe that it is the duty of Christian churches to hold communion with each other, to entertain an enlarged affection for each other, as

members of the same body, and to co-operate for the promotion of the Christian cause; but that no church, nor union of churches, has any right or power to interfere with the faith or discipline of any other church, further than to separate from such as, in faith or practice, depart from the gospel of Christ.

XI. They believe that it is the privilege and duty of every church to call forth such of its members as may appear to be qualified, by the Holy Spirit, to sustain the office of the ministry: and that Christian churches unitedly ought to consider the maintenance of the Christian ministry in an adequate degree of learning, as one of its especial cares; that the cause of the Gospel may be both honourably sustained, and constantly promoted.

XII. They believe that church officers, whether bishops or deacons, should be chosen by the free voice of the church, but that their dedication to the duties of their office should take place with special prayer, and by solemn designation; to which most of the churches add the imposition of hands by those already in office.

XIII. They believe that the fellowship of every Christian church should be so liberal as to admit to communion in the Lord's Supper, all whose faith and godliness are, on the whole, undoubted, though conscientiously differing in points of minor importance; and that this outward sign of fraternity in Christ should be co-extensive with the fraternity itself, though without involving any compliances which conscience would deem to be sinful.



